The Happineſs of the Saints in a ſeparate State.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

HITCHIN, IN HERTS, AUG. 27, 1773,

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE

Rev. Mr. SAMUEL JAMES, A. M.

Who departed this Life, AUG. 22, 1773,

In the 58th Year of his Age.

BY BENJAMIN WALLIN, A. M.

LONDON:

Printed for the WIDOW;

And ſold by

Meſſ. BUCKLAND, KEITH, BISHOP, GARDINER, and TOMKINS.

MDCCLXXIII.

[Price Sixpence.]

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

HITCHIN, IN HERTS, Aug. 27, 1773,

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE

Rev. Mr. SAMUEL JAMES, A. M.

Who departed this Life, Aug. 22, 1773,

In the 58th Year of his Age.

BRITISH MUSEUM

By BENJAMIN WALLIN, A. M.

LONDON:

Printed for the Widow;

And Sold by

MeF. Buckland, Keith, Bishop, Gardiner,
and Tomkins.

MDCCLXXIII.

[Price Sixpence.]

PSALM XVI. 11.

———*In thy preſence* is *fulneſs of joy: at thy right hand* there are *pleaſures for evermore.*

HOWEVER proper it may be, on ſeveral accounts, that funeral ſolemnities are performed by an affectionate friend, it is truly a difficult ſervice; but the Lord is all-ſufficient; I alſo hope, for your candid, patient, and ſerious attention.

I AM now to addreſs you on the moſt ſorrowful event that has befallen this congregation ſince February 10, 1742-3, when it pleaſed the Lord of the harveſt to call up to his preſence the late Reverend Mr. John Needham, once the guide of my youth, and many years the beloved and ſucceſsful paſtor of the church then meeting here. It was the divine pleaſure ſoon to make up that melancholy breach, by the miſſion of a youth, whoſe promiſing talents hath not deceived us, being juſtified by a judicious and profitable miniſtry, from his

entrance among you, to the period of his days, which has now taken place.

ALAS! the carnage of death, even among the heralds of life! Here is another ſpoil of the enemy! "Moſes my ſervant is dead, ſaith "the Lord." Then Joſhua receives his commiſſion; but, was Joſhua to continue for ever? After many exploits in the ſervice of the Lord and his people, he alſo died, and was buried in the border of his inheritance. In like manner the corps of our Reverend dear Brother lies hid in the grave: he is ſilent in the duſt. No more ſhall we ſee his once florid and amiable countenance; or again be ſaluted with his ſweet, though maſculine voice, proclaiming the tidings of grace and ſalvation! But need I add to your grief? Much rather would I comfort you, and what more is adapted to chear our ſpirits, than a proſpect by faith of the bliſs he enjoys by this change? To this purpoſe I ſhall explain, illuſtrate, and apply the delightful paſſage before us; and may the Spirit of life and glory render it effectual to the comfort and advantage of every one preſent.

THAT our text is a prophecy of Chriſt, appears from the teſtimony of two inſpired miniſters,

miniſters, Peter at Jeruſalem, Acts ii. 28. and Paul at Antioch, chap. xiii. 35. of the ſame ſacred hiſtory: it ſtands connected with the verſes immediately preceeding, and referred to the Meſſiah, is expreſſive of his high joy, in a certain foreſight of the glory whĩch was to follow his ſufferings, as I apprehend, both *before* and *after* his reſurrection. This joy, we are told, "was ſet before him when "he endured the croſs," Heb. xii. 2. And for this he pleads, John xvii. 5.

To make way for my preſent deſign, it may be uſeful to obſerve, that of all human bodies which are laid in the grave, it was peculiar to that of our Saviour to be releaſed from the bands of death, before it ſaw corruption: and indeed, as Peter declares, Acts ii. 24. "it was not poſſible that he ſhould be "holden of it." A glorious truth this, containing much of the myſtery of the goſpel, and the conſolation of the faithful. It was impoſſible in ſeveral reſpects. It was *naturally* impoſſible, on account of the deity of our Lord, and the victory he obtained over the enemy by the blood of his croſs. It was likewiſe *morally* impoſſibly, when we conſider the divine decrees, the prophecies concerning

him, and the end for which he was delivered unto death, and, which is the crowning article, having made ample ſatisfaction by his atonement for the ſins of his people, whoſe ſurety he was, the equitable cauſe of his confinement was totally and finally removed; it was therefore alſo *legally* impoſſible that he ſhould be detained; and accordingly he roſe again the third day, as foretold by the prophets, particularly in that famous verſe, the 10th of this Pſalm, "Neither wilt thou ſuffer thine "Holy One to ſee corruption."

But while his body lay entombed, lay his ſoul aſleep with it, or was it forſaken during the ſolemn interval? Nor is there any ground for that popiſh notion of its deſcending into hell among the damned; yet ſomewhere it was, and although its ſeparate ſtate was but tranſitory, even but a few days only; it ſeems unreaſonable to deny that its bliſs, during that period, had a ſhare in the concern and joy of our Redeemer: and we know by his anſwer to the penitent thief at mount Calvary, Luke xxiii. 43. that on the day he expired he aſcended to his kingdom. Of this inſtant glory in paradiſe, Jeſus was no leſs confident, than he was that his corps

ſhould

ſhould be prevented from rottenneſs by a timely reſurrection: and this I apprehend is at leaſt included in the clauſe which introduces the text: "Thou wilt ſhew me the path of life." We render it from Peter, Acts ii. 28. "Thou "wilt make known to me the ways of life." i. e. experimentally: thus Pſalm l. 23. "To "him that ordereth his converſation aright, "I will ſhew my ſalvation:" that is, he ſhall be ſaved in the day of judgment; which is the awful ſubject of that divine ſong. In like manner here, to be ſhewn the path of life, is not to be underſtood by way of inſtruction; in this ſenſe goſpel miniſters ſhew unto men the way of ſalvation; but it is taken practically in the paſſage before us; and it amounts to an aſſurance of entering into life, even a life of bleſſedneſs and glory in a future ſtate of exiſtence. This the ſoul of Jeſus certainly did, the moment of its exit from the body, which he left nailed to the tree.

Now this life, as diſtinguiſhed from whatever may be enjoyed in the preſent world, eſſentially conſiſts in being in the divine preſence; not as it is now, by faith, but in a way of viſion or ſight, as declared, Rev. xxi. 4. "They

"They ſee his face:" Of which more hereafter.

But there is a certain connexion between the head and its members. And you need not be told that Chriſt entered into heaven as the forerunner of his people to receive them to glory. No doubt, then, the joy of the Redeemer, in a view of his own glorified humanity, either in a ſeparate or re-united ſtate, extended to that of his choſen, whom he loved, and for whom he laid down his life, that they might be conformed to his image. It is therefore in a perfect conſiſtence with its prophetic ſenſe, that I conſider the words as expreſſive of the Pſalmiſt's confidence of his own future happineſs, on a proſpect by faith of this glory of the Meſſiah, his Lord, whom he truſted, for that David was a believer as well as a prophet, will ſcarce be denied. Thus the paſſage is reduced to the experience and hope of every chriſtian; and conſequently preſents us with the ſtate of our departed brother, which comes up to the intention of my choice of the ſubject.

Our text is an elegant and animating deſcription of the ſaint's future bliſs; in the contemplation of which, each believer may

glroy,

glory, it being a happineſs he ſhall certainly attain on his abſence from the body; in which account the following things are to be noted: The ſituation of the bleſſed in the heavenly world: they are in the *preſence* of God, and *at his right hand*; their entertainment there; they have *joy* and *pleaſures*; and then, we have the degree and duration of this their honor and bliſs: It is *full* and *everlaſting*. I ſhall attempt a few thoughts on this ſublime ſubject in the following method.

I. EXPLAIN the terms of their ſituation who are paſſed into glory.

II. POINT out ſome occaſions and ſources of their ineffable delight. And,

III. PROVE the completeneſs and eternal duration of the felicity they enjoy.

THESE articles diſpatched, for I muſt be very brief. I ſhall apply what is ſaid for our relief under the preſent great loſs; give ſome anecdotes of the deceaſed; and cloſe with a familiar addreſs to my audience, as they may be ſeverally concerned. And,

I. WE are told, 1 Cor. ii. 9. "Eye "hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have

"entered

"entered into the heart of man, the things "which God hath prepared for them that "love him." So then, the mode of this life, into which the righteous enter at death, lies far above us. Nevertheleſs, ſeeing the Holy Ghoſt has graciouſly deſcribed this heavenly ſtate, by images ſuited to our underſtanding, for the eſtabliſhment of our faith, it is certainly incumbent on us to endeavor after a true and certain idea of the terms he is pleaſed to make uſe of.

Now it ſeems that the ſpirits of the juſt are placed in the *preſence*, and at the *right hand* of God. The eſſential preſence of Jehovah is univerſal. The Lord alſo is preſent in the execution of his providence, which is converſant with every creature on earth. There is likewiſe a certain ſpecial, though inviſible, and ſometimes inſenſible preſence of a covenant God with his people, inſured by his promiſe, which cannot fail: He ſaith to them individually, Iſa. xli. 10. "Fear not, I am "with thee." And again, Heb. xiii. 5. "I "will never leave thee nor forſake thee." And in a ſocial capacity we have this gracious engagement, "Where two or three are "gathered together in my name, there am I

"in

"in the midſt of them." And further, the Lord is ſometimes preſent with the believer in a way of communion by his Spirit, in his waiting upon him, ſtiled *coming to him*, and taking *up his abode with him*, John xiv. 23. And again, Rev. iii. 20. "I will come in to "him, and will ſup with him, and he with "me:" figures which expreſs the moſt intimate and delightful fellowſhip; the loſs of which is deprecated by thoſe who love God; witneſs David, who under a cloud for his heinous tranſgreſſions, bitterly cries, Pſalm li. 11. "Caſt me not away from thy preſence!" This bleſſed fruition of the ſaints on earth, comes neareſt to, and is a prelibation of the joy ſet before us in the text: for this taſte of his grace ſhall not deceive us, Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. But the ſubject in hand is not the preſence of God with us; it is our being preſent with him; a ſtate which commences on our exit from this earthly tabernacle, if the inſpired apoſtle was not miſtaken, 2 Cor. v. 8. or if there was any propriety in his deſiring to depart, and to be with Chriſt, as in Philip. i. 23. that is perſonally and directly preſent, as already obſerved, in a way of viſion; the attaining which, we are inſured by his authoritative and all-prevailing

interceſſion, John xvii. 24. The word ſignifies * face, or faces, and exactly anſwers to the expreſſion † of Peter, Acts ii. 28. we render *countenance*. This preſence, I ſay, is by ſight, in diſtinction from any kind of enjoyment in this ſtate, in like manner as Chriſt now appears in the preſence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. Here, at beſt, our nearneſs to God, and communion with him, is as it were in the dark, and at a diſtance; but there, in yonder world of light and glory, they ſee his face. Pſal. xvii. 15. "As for me, ſays Da-"vid, I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs." Without any other medium than what is abſolutely needful, on account of the infinitely glorious nature of God, and that of his creature, in its higheſt ſtate of perfection; there the ſaints, in their robes of righteouſneſs, appear in the courts and preſence chamber of their prince, to behold his glory on the throne, where they meet with an honorable and gracious reception, and commune with him face to face, in a manner; beyond all expreſſion tranſcending the intercouſe Moſes was indulged with on earth.

* פניך † Προσώπου.

As

As to the other expreſſion, *at the right hand of God*, it is purely metaphorical; as when applied to Jeſus, whom Stephen ſaw in the like glorious ſituation, Acts vii. 56. agreeable to Pſalm cx. 1. Now this, with reſpect to the Father, by whom Chriſt is exalted, cannot be taken in a corporal ſenſe, for that divine perſon is not cloathed with fleſh; and though we may apprehend the glorified body of the Son has literally, truly, and properly, a right and left hand, there can be no compariſon betwixt them in this deſcription of the happineſs of ſeparate ſpirits. The alluſion is to the known cuſtom of princes, who on certain occaſions have diſtinguiſhed their favourites by placing them at their right hand: it betokens dignity and power, and ſets forth the honor of the ſaints in glory. Now thus advanced near the throne, theſe happy ſouls find pleaſures and joy; which leads,

II. To the occaſions and ſources of this delectable fruition. That the ſaints in that ſtate obtain joy and gladneſs, the ſcriptures abundantly ſhew, Iſaiah xxxv. 10. and this is the welcome of the believer who has finiſhed his work, "enter thou into the joy of thy

"Lord," Mat. xxv. 21. And again, Psalm xxxvi. 8, "thou shalt make them drink of "the river of thy pleasures." If that refers to the fruition of faith, how much more shall they drink of this river in a state of vision at the fountain of life! But whence springs this joy in the celestial paradise? And no doubt,

1. THE chief source of this heavenly delight will result from that presence in which the saints stand, or rather from God himself: He is the fountain of joy to his people, whose happiness in that world is in proportion to their fruition of him. Psalm lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" In thy *presence*, or in thy *countenance*, as we have seen Peter express it, may intend that this divine countenance is the source of the joy with which they are filled, who dwell at the right hand of God, and this may be considered both *passively* and *actively*, that is, in respect of the saints vision of him, and his aspect on them. This joy and pleasure will doubtless very much arise from their vision of God, who is the glorious object of contemplation among them who reside in his presence: this may be gathered from several passages mentioned already: *I will behold his face*; and again *they*,

see

ſee his face. Here we ſee but through a glaſs darkly the glory of the Lord. The brighteſt proſpect we have of Jehovah, either by the works of creation and providence, or in divine revelation, or even under the moſt extraordinary diſcoveries by the Spirit with which any are indulged in this life, muſt be infinitely ſhort of that which the ſaints have in light; and if, as the ſcriptures and experience will ſhew, in ſome inſtances, the believer's joy may now be unſpeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 8. what bliſs muſt they taſte who behold the Lord under the fulleſt and moſt effectual manifeſtation of that variety of glory in which he ſhines at the right hand of the Majeſty in the heavens? This viſion, I humbly conceive, carries in it a moſt intimate converſe with every perfection in Deity, and with each divine perſon.

THIS preſence of God in the heavenly ſtate, in an active ſenſe alſo, affords unſpeakable delight to his ſaints, who are with him. In his preſence, that is in the favor of his countenance, which there ſmiles upon them, and ſpreads its beams over them, without any reſerve or interruption for ever: in this reſpect "their ſun goeth not down, nei-

"ther

"ther doth their moon withdraw its light, "for the Lord is unto them an everlaſting "light, and their God their glory," Iſa. lx. 20. This glory reſults from his gracious view of them, of which they cannot be inſenſible in a ſtate of viſion. The higheſt joy of the ſaints on earth ſprings from the light of God's countenance, Pſal. vi. 7. This gladneſs exceeds all creature delight: I ſpeak to them who have taſted his grace. How ſweet is one moment's communion with God! when the beams of his face ſhine upon us, when his love is ſhed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt; then we can joy in God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. v. 11. Then his loving kindneſs is better than life; and if ſuch joy and pleaſure is ſometimes experienced in the preſent ſtate of comparative diſtance and darkneſs, what infinite delight muſt attend thoſe rich and unlimited communications of divine love, which ſolace the hearts of the juſt made perfect in heaven, where each happy ſoul is in the boſom of the Father! Thus not only the beauty of the Lord *objectively* conſidered, or the ſaint's view of him, but the ſmiles of his face, or the complacency with which he beholds them, is alſo a ſource of the ſublime

glad-

gladneſs which enters into the bliſs of thoſe who are in the preſence of God. But to proceed,

2. ANOTHER ſource of joy to the ſaints in this happy ſtate, reſults from themſelves. There is a ſound ſenſe in which a good man is even now ſatisfied from himſelf, Prov. xiv. 14. he is ſo at times in ſeveral reſpects, and more eſpecially on account of the hope that is in him of glory to come: how much more his ſatisfaction and joy, when arrived to that ſtate where he finds himſelf perfect, and feels a bleſſed tranquillity in righteouſneſs! Not to mention many grievous interruptions and ſorrows to which ſaints are liable in the body, which cannot affect them in a ſeparate ſtate. Here they are more or leſs diſturbed from indwelling ſin; their poor hearts are continually expoſed to the incurſions of luſts, which war in our members, but there they are in perfect purity and peace. Here faith is often weak and dimſighted, knowledge is defective, and there is a languor on the affections in reſpect of divine and ſpiritual objects, of which the believer juſtly complains; and at beſt he is ſoon tired, through the feebleneſs of his frame; but there faith is changed into viſion, the ſaints are in light, and there is no remaining

ing imperfection or wearineſs in the exerciſe of their ſpiritual ſenſes; all their powers are in the higheſt ſtate of vigour and perfection, while, with ſeraphic love, they ſing the praiſe of ſovereign grace, till the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion. What an unſpeakable pleaſure muſt ariſe in the ſoul that feels itſelf freed from every imperfection, and capable of the viſion of God in righteouſneſs! Again,

3. THIS joy of the ſpirits made perfect in heaven, I apprehend doth, in a meaſure, ariſe from the knowledge they have of the diſpenſations of providence towards them. Whatever may be reſerved to the day of revelation, when the Judgments of God will be manifeſt to all, there is reaſon to conclude, that in a ſeparate ſtate the ſaints behold the infinite wiſdom, faithfulneſs, and love of God in his dealings with them on earth; even in the preſent world, ſometimes, God brings us forth to the light, and we behold his righteouſneſs, Mic. vii. 9. One providence, as it were, unfolds another, and we live to ſee the good of the evil that has befallen us, and in a meaſure the deſign of our heavenly Father, in this or the other diſpenſation, we could not before underſtand. But our Lord ſaith to Peter, John

xiii. 7. "What I do thou knoweſt not now, "but thou ſhalt know hereafter." Here there is often a cloud on the throne of the Almighty; though judgment is before him, the believer cannot ſee him, his ways are in the deep, and he, as it were, ſets darkneſs on his paths; but there the ſaints turn over the leaves of that book once ſealed from their eyes, and read the mercy and truth of the moſt cruciating trial. Now we *know*, but hereafter we ſhall *ſee*, that all things work together for good, Rom. viii. 28. See how every thing has concurred to the accompliſhment of the divine purpoſe, and the promiſe of grace in bringing us to glory: and who can fully conceive the exquiſite pleaſure that muſt attend this view of the love and faithfulneſs of a covenant God. Further,

4. The communion of holy angels, and of *all* ſaints, in a ſtate of perfection, is another ſource of this heavenly joy and delight. How theſe different rank of beings are joined in this fellowſhip, or by what means they converſe with each other, are queſtions more curious than profitable; however ingenuous and probable the ſolution propoſed, but it is evident that they unite in the worſhip of heaven,

Rev. v. 11. "The voice of the angels round "about the throne was heard with that of the "elders, aſcribing honor to the Lamb that "was ſlain." Angels are not indeed of the church, which the incarnate Son of God purchaſed with his own blood; they are not part of his myſtical body, but they are elect under him, in whom the Father will gather together in one all things in heaven and in earth, Eph. i. 10. In the temple above they are in one community under Chriſt, as their head, and everlaſting companions in glory. If in this ſtate of weakneſs and ſin, there is conſolation and joy in a *partial* and *limited* communion of ſaints, which will ſcarce be denied, what bliſs muſt reſult from their *catholic* fellowſhip, where all occaſions of diſcord and grief are eternally ceaſed! and if aſſociating with human ſaints only affords ſingular, and ſometimes unſpeakable delight, how muſt it enhance the pleaſures of the redeemed to join thoſe ſpirits of the angelic order, who excel in wiſdom and love, and have miniſtred towards their ſalvation? But again,

5. It will not be doubted by any who have taſted the pleaſures of real religion, but that the employment of the ſaints in glory

is

is joyful. We have already obſerved, that they are engaged in an intent contemplation of every divine perfection and perſon in the Deity, which in itſelf muſt be a ſource of infinite entertainment and joy; and eſpecially when accompanied with a ſurvey of the diſpenſations of Providence, in a ſubſerviency to the counſels of grace: but, Oh the delights of adoring, loving, and praiſing Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in a perfect vigour of faculty, without interruption or wearineſs! It has been noted, that our chief certain knowledge of what they do in heaven is, that they love and ſing. Do you know the pleaſures of love? Have you felt the ſweetneſs of an out-going heart to the object of your ſincere and ardent affection? Did you ever taſte the delight of a ſoul following hard after God, and a deſire to his name? Do you now ſometimes find unſpeakable delight when you are enlarged in the meditation and praiſes of the Lord? and will you ſcruple to pronounce their hearts filled with ineffable joy and pleaſure, who are day and night employed in theſe divine exerciſes, in a perfection of righteouſneſs? Nor can I omit,

6. The concern which the victory of the

ſaints muſt have in the joys of their reſt: They each overcome through the blood of the Lamb. It appears from Rev. vii. 9. that they ſtand before the throne, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, known enſigns of victory: however figurative the deſcription, it repreſents them as conquerors; and by what follows, namely, that they cried with a loud voice, ſaying, "Salvation to our God," it is evident that their conqueſt animates their praiſes, with which their joy is connected. To this agrees the choſen expreſſion in the text, we render * evermore, which is perfectly correſpondent with Rev. iii. 21. "To him that overcometh will I "grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as "I alſo overcame, and am ſat down with my "Father in his throne." And further,

7. An immediate view of their bleſſed reſurrection, and their appearance with Chriſt at his coming, has its place in this joy. It will ſcarce be refuſed that a proſpect ſo animating in a life of faith ſhould fail of pleaſure in a

* נצח, a military term, which ſignifieth victory or triumph. It is in the title of many of the Pſalms. למנצח *victori Arius Mont.* i. e. to the conqueror, or to him that conquereth.

ſtate

ſtate of viſion. With what inexpreſſible gladneſs muſt they ſtand ready to be revealed from heaven, when he ſhall be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them that believe! Once more,

THIS joy is crowned with eternity. Indeed could this ſtate of felicity and honor decline, or vaniſh away, however diſtant the period, it would be inadequate to the bliſs of its ſubject, and ceaſe to be heaven: but we know from the word of the Lord, and from our text in particular, that theſe pleaſures, or pleaſant things, that are enjoyed in the divine preſence, are abiding and eternal. And this leads,

III. To prove the completeneſs and everlaſting duration of the ſaints felicity in heaven. It ſeems that there is a *fulneſs* of joy, in that ſtate, and pleaſures evermore. The term rendered *fulneſs* anſwers to our Engliſh word *ſeven*; a number often uſed in ſcripture prophecy, to ſignify completeneſs or perfection: and if time would permit, we might largely ſhew, that in the fruition of paradiſe there is a fulneſs in the object, and conſequently the ſubject muſt be complete in his joy. This might be exemplified in every article

ticle diſcuſſed; but it muſt ſuffice to inſtance in the two grand and principal ſources of thoſe pleaſures with which they are ſolaced, namely, *their God* and *themſelves*. With reſpect to themſelves, we have ſeen that they are in a ſtate of perfection; each veſſel of glory has a fulneſs in himſelf, ſufficient to furniſh his proportion of ſupply to thoſe with whom he is in fellowſhip: not indeed an inexhauſtible fulneſs conſidered in himſelf: even in glory the ſaints are not independent; nevertheleſs, being confirmed in a ſtate of perfection, and being without interruption or meaſure, ſupplied from the fountain of life, their glorified head, they are to all intents and purpoſes a fulneſs, as it were, to each other, to a mutual participation of joy and delight, from one to the other. It may be difficult to expreſs the idea: what I mean is, that no one in this bleſſed communion, being thus united to the Mediator, and ſupplied from his all-ſufficient and eternal fulneſs, in a glorified ſtate, can fail of anſwering his part, ſo far as the bliſs of that ſtate depends upon the mutual communication of the ſaints; which is the more to be credited, ſince we are told in Eph. iv. 16. that "every joint ſupplieth, according to the "effec-

"effectual working in the meaſure of every "part, maketh increaſe of the body, unto the "edifying of itſelf in love." And that this is experimentally verified, in a right ſtate of things, in the communion of ſaints on earth, is evident from the context: how much more among the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect in heaven? But we have ſeen that this joy in that ſtate principally ariſes from their viſion of God, and the communications of his love to them: and if we apply it to the glorified Son, on whom the church immediately depends for her everlaſting felicity, his infinite fulneſs is not to be queſtioned; the neceſſary conſequence is, a fulneſs of joy in them who are filled from that fountain of life.

In this abundant joy there are inconceivable pleaſures, and theſe are everlaſting as their cauſe. It is obſerved, that the heavenly ſtate is rarely mentioned in ſcripture without an intimation of its eternity: and indeed without this there would be no ſoul ſatisfaction in the hope of the goſpel. But what ſhould put a period to their happineſs who are in the divine preſence? The counſel of God, by which they are fixed a pillar in his temple, is immutable. The virtue of that precious blood, by which they are redeemed,

and

and which is the meritorious cauſe of their being admitted to glory, is infinite and eternal; and the Redeemer is with them. What then ſhould diminiſh this joy and pleaſure of his ſaints in paradiſe? Not their adverſaries; they are finally ſubdued; nor ſhall theſe conquered enemies, however malicious, any more reach to diſturb, much leſs to deprive them. What then; can they drain their ſources of joy in that ſtate? Not while their God is all-perfect, and his love like himſelf, is unchangeable: neither can their happineſs ceaſe through any decay in themſelves, who are made perfect in holineſs. So then, it is evident, that in the preſence of God, in his temple above, there is indeed fulneſs of joy, and at his right hand there are pleaſures for evermore. O bleſſed ſoul, unto whom the Lord hath graciouſly ſhewn this path of life, and who are thus full of joy with his countenance, in the light of which, angels and ſaints at his throne, are eternally happy!

And now, beloved, how adapted this proſpect of glory, by faith, to comfort us under the ſorrows of time? amidſt all the exuberant goodneſs, and rich grace beſtowed in this life, he muſt be a perſon of extraordinary experience, who

who has not more ſorrow than joy, either natural or ſpiritual; not to dwell on the trials of ſenſe; ſingularly happy the Chriſtian, if ſuch a man can be found, who has not more corruption than grace, and more pain from the former than pleaſure from the latter. Here, in general, our light is exceeded by darkneſs; yea, in the houſe of God itſelf, and from thoſe with whom we have taken ſweet counſel, there is danger, thro' one ſad occaſion or another, of being more grieved than delighted: but theſe ſorrows flee away before the light of that joy, and thoſe pleaſures, which have been the ſubject of our meditation. And, who would live always? Why ſo fond of continuing in the preſent ſtate? What though we are diſtinguiſhed by our degree of light, and ſpiritual attainments, beyond the generality? Though our preſent enjoyments, and communion, are comparatively pleaſant, and we have much of the light of God's countenance, for which we have reaſon to be thankful; all this is infinitely ſhort of the fulneſs of joy with which ſaints are ſolaced at the right hand of God. It is carnal and low, and unworthy this bleſſed hope on a change, to live a day grovelling here, but with ſubmiſſion to the

wiſdom and will of our heavenly Father. O that the view we have taken might raiſe and fix our affection on things above, and fill us with longings after being with God and Chriſt in this bleſſed world before us! And, ſeeing this is the happineſs of thoſe who are departed in the Lord, what a light here ariſeth in the darkneſs of their death. Surely this certain and delightful proſpect of the dear man departed may alleviate our ſorrow; not to mourn our loſs in his death would be *unnatural*; and therefore *ungracious*. The fortitude of the *chriſtian*, under grievous afflictions, deſtroys not the *man*. Our tears and lamentations, if not to exceſs, and if accompanied with reſignation and patience, are becoming and uſeful. The preſent occaſion is truly ſorrowful; and need enough we have to cry to the Lord to ſupport us, and to make up the breach; the man who can be unconcerned, or not grieved at this ſevere ſtroke, muſt be amazingly ſenſeleſs; nevertheleſs, let us not dwell altogether on the dark ſide of the ſcene, or pore in the grave of the deceaſed. Fix the eye of your faith to this divine teleſcope: Was our friend, who now ſleepeth, a believer in Chriſt? Died he in the faith? Lo, his ſoul among

among the ſpirits of the juſt, rejoicing at the throne of God and the Lamb! How far departed ſaints are acquainted with the temper and conduct of their ſurviving relations and friends, on account of their deceaſe, I ſhall not conjecture. But may I not preſume, that if this happy man now releaſed and exalted, ſaw us in immoderate grief, he would, tho' with compaſſion, reprove us in language like that of our Lord to his troubled diſciples, in the night in which he was betrayed, John xiv. 28. "If "ye loved me ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, "I go unto the Father." In like manner would the deceaſed ſay unto us, If ye loved me ye would rejoice, that I now know what it is to be with Chriſt, where he is, and to behold his glorious face in righteouſneſs. This we are perſuaded is the bleſſed ſituation and experience of his ſoul, whoſe departure we mourn: The exalted Saviour has received him to himſelf; nothing can add to his joy ſhort of the approaching reſurrection, when his body, now in corruption, ſhall be revived, immortal and glorious: and what love is this we boaſt to our friend, in whoſe happineſs we cannot rejoice?

I HAVE neither time nor inclination for flattering encomiums; but think it decent to mention ſomething relating to our late worthy brother, for which no apology is needful in this mournful aſſembly. Paſſing by his amiable and exemplary conduct in domeſtic life, in which he adorned his profeſſion, I ſhall chiefly touch on what concerns his religious and miniſterial character.

MY acquaintaince with the deceaſed commenced ſoon after his appearance in public. He was then a robuſt lively youth; but remarkably ſerious and devout, as one who walked in the views of eternity, which habit prevailed through his life: his open diſpoſition, promiſing abilities, and ſtill more, his ſpiritual favor, and the motives on which he entered on the miniſtry, engaged my heart toward him, inſomuch that I have often lamented our diſtant ſituation, which in a meaſure deprived me of ſo valuable a companion, and eſpecially as my friend had no great inclination to correſpondence by writing.

SOME preſent can witneſs, with what unanimity and joy this your late excellent miniſter, who began to preach among you in November 1742; was choſen to the paſtoral office,

to

to which he was ordained July 1743. In this arduous and important charge, as hinted already, he continued to the end, labouring abundantly, and with no ſmall ſucceſs, as appears from repeated enlargements of your meeting-houſe, and the numbers that joined in communion. Thus his miniſtry among you ran parallel with the courſe of his life, which is truly praiſe worthy. I am not ſufficiently acquainted with my audience, to know how it may be with particular perſons; but deſign no reflection on any one who may think himſelf affected by the obſervation. It muſt be owned, that there may be a juſt call for diſſolving the ſacred relation, which ſubſiſts between a paſtor and his church; but it is now too often ſeen that men of this public character, being given to change, in all appearance, without any cogent reaſon, leave their flock, to the wounding of many, and the detriment of ſocial religion. Indeed our late honored brother met with ſingular encouragement; his people revered him; his divine Maſter owned him; many were the ſeals of his miniſtry; he was alſo univerſally and highly eſteemed by miniſters and churches that knew him; and he had, for the moſt part, much

aſſiſtance

aſſiſtance and pleaſure in his work: theſe are diſtinguiſhing favors. Nevertheleſs, that man is little acquainted with human nature, and the failings even of real Chriſtans, in a private or in a public capacity, who muſt be told that patience and ſelf-denial are needful to a perſeverance many years in the ſervice of any congregation; it is therefore the honor and advantage, both of miniſter and people, when they are enabled to maugre all difficulties, and cleave to one another till parted by death. Our friend was not without his temptations from other quarters; but, ſo great were his conflicts thro' unbelief, that once, at leaſt, he ſeemed on the point of giving up his charge; ſo hard did the enemy beſet him! This I the rather mention, as theſe trials ſerved to ſhew his conſcientious and cordial attachment to the office he had undertaken, in the name of the Lord; as he once and again diſcountenanced private intimation of his being acceptable elſewhere, with a view to remove him, ſo his love to your ſouls had no ſmall ſhare in the reſolution he maintained, thro' grace, to withſtand every temptation to relinquiſh his poſt. He found you in his heart, to live and die with you: and the

event,

event, as we have ſeen, was according to his deſire. His work is now finiſhed; and will you not, my dear friends, of this chriſtian community, on the loſs of ſo able and affectionate a guide, ſuffer the word of exhortation by the apoſtle? Heb. xiii. 7. "Remember *him who has had* the rule over you, who "*has* ſpoken unto you the word of God, *his* "faith follow, conſidering the end of *his* con-"verſation." It will be happy, my brethren, if you are enabled to hearken to this counſel of God; it is ever needful; and the more as diviſions are ſo frequent under the like changes in providence; a ſad, but true ſymptom of our growing declenſion from thoſe things which ſhould be added to our faith: Whatever the occaſion, theſe ſhameful and threatening ſchiſms manifeſt the want of humility, and that ſubmiſſion to one another in the fear of the Lord, without which there can be no peace in Iſrael: Therefore allow me to beſeech, that you take heed to yourſelves; every one to his own ſpirit: Oh ſeek not your *own*, but the things which are *Chriſt*'s! It is a time of great danger, when diſorders abound, and many are ready to intrude where the diſcipline, and charity of the goſpel are wanting.

Remember,

Remember, that from the beginning, you have been favored with men whose characters has given weight to their ministry, and under whose labors, by the blessing of God, you have been more than seventy years a respectable and flourishing people; therefore look to yourselves, that ye lose not those things which ye have gained, by an indiscreet or precipitant choice; let the testimonies of the Lord be the men of your counsel, that he may give you another pastor, whom he will honor, to the increase of his interest among you.

But to return to our brother, your late affectionate and skilful director. His zeal for the truths of the gospel is known; and he came behind none in a concern for their saving efficacy on the hearts of his audience; the salvation of all who heard him was his ardent pursuit; and particularly of late years, he was remarkably intent on the profit of the rising generation. I think, yea, he knew I thought, that his anxiety about it exceeded. If that be impossible, this I know, my young friends, that he travelled in birth for your souls, to the prejudice of his natural health. It broke his rest to find you unconcerned; and, in all appearance, perishing in your sins.

Two

Two or three years ago, it pleaſed the Lord in a meaſure to ſatiate his longing deſires with a joyful harveſt: many, you know, were added to the church; I have no ſuſpicion to the contrary, but in charity wiſh it may be found without exception, that there was then a gathering of fruit unto life eternal. It may be, ſome of you, beheld this work of the Lord, without any concern for your own ſouls! God knoweth; I appeal to your conſcience: allow me to be free. This extraordinary appearance, excited your curioſity: you came out, and ſaw many baptized, and joined to the church; but after all, felt no ſenſe of your own need of Chriſt, and the ſalvation in which your enlightened neighbours rejoiced. What were you better than thoſe unbelievers reproved by our Saviour? Mat. xxi. 32. who ſaw many believe, and baptized, under the miniſtry of John; "yet "when they had ſeen it repented not after-"ward, that they might believe him." Such is the aggravation of your dangerous ſtupidity! And, do you ſtill remain unconcerned? The Lord of his infinite mercy awaken you, leſt it prove fatal! But are any preſent, who

were ſenſibly touched? It may be ſome of you were under painful convictions of ſin, and had many thoughts about the ſalvation of your ſoul and eternity: but through the cares of this world, youthful pleaſures, very different from thoſe at the right hand of God, and other carnal luſts; theſe convictions have been ſtifled, and all ſerious thoughts are vaniſhed: fears of wrath, and deſire after an eſcape, are now obliviated: your hearts are as it were hardened againſt the fear of the Lord, and from any further concern about your future and everlaſting welfare. Your caſe, my dear hearers, is truly deplorable! Indeed you are yet under the means of grace; and all things are poſſible with God; but permit me, in compaſſion and faithfulneſs, to tell you, that you are in a worſe condition than you were before theſe convictions faſtened on you, which you ſince have ſhook off in favor of the fleſh. If you are not recovered, the greater will be your condemnation! Oh, may the Almighty King of ſaints triumph over your unworthineſs, and bring down your rebellious and obſtinate hearts, truly penitent, at the foot-ſtool of his mercy ſeat; where he waits to be gra-

gracious, to the chief of ſinners! if not, if you die in your ſins, my dear departed brother, your late miniſter, who often wreſtled with and for you, in vain; yea, and he alſo, that is now providentially ſpeaking to you, will be called to teſtify againſt you. You will then be numbered with thoſe, for ſuch there will be when Chriſt comes to judgment, who, having trifled with the grace of God, will bewail, but, alas, in deſpair, in ſome ſuch language as uſed in Jeremiah viii. 20. "The "harveſt is paſt, the ſummer is ended, and "we are not ſaved!"

On this mournful event, my honored and beloved fellow labourers in the Lord, at leaſt ſuch of you as are ſituated in the church near adjoining, may you not ſay of our brother now departed, as Eliſha when Elijah went up, "My father! my father!" By this ſtroke you are deprived of a ſincere and active friend, who was able and willing to counſel you. One among you, through grace, will, I doubt not, as occaſion may require, take the lead in his room. And, ſeeing we are hereby reminded, that we muſt alſo ſhortly put off this our tabernacle, let us imitate Peter the apoſtle,

and improve the hint unto a freſh reſolution for diligence in the duties of our ſtation: and may this bereaving providence prove a means of promoting brotherly love, and thereby your conſolation in Chriſt, to a ſtill further ſpread of his kingdom!

A WORD more of the deceaſed, and I cloſe.

OUR friend, your late miniſter, many years enjoyed an uncommon ſhare of health, which enabled him, with ſcarce any interruption, freely to exert his conſiderable talents in the ſervice of Chriſt and your ſouls. His firm conſtitution ſeemed to promiſe long life; nor was he cut off in the prime of his days, for which we have reaſon to be thankful; but we were too ready to preſume that they would be ſtill further extended, and that this valuable inſtrument, ſo uſeful in the church, and ſo hail in his perſon, would have been ſpared to old age, and manifeſted the power of God to the young generation his bowels earned after. But the thoughts of the Lord are not ours: and, alas, what is bodily ſtrength, when mortal diſeaſes receive their commiſſion! Towards the latter end of the year 1764, this dear man was ſeized with a threat-

threatening diſorder, which lay chiefly on his ſpirits: from this he recovered, and came forth with freſh vigour; and through rich and aſtoniſhing mercy, in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel peace, as many here witneſs; thus he continued a while; but, as I apprehend, not without ſymptoms of natural declenſion, repeated attacks gradually reduced him; and laſt ſummer he was indeed very low; nevertheleſs, he revived in ſome degree, by means of a journey: how rejoiced to ſee him again in the pulpit, and to hear the word of life from his lips! We were ready to promiſe ourſelves; but, ah! the flattering hope! clouds returned after rain; the enemy came upon him as a flood; he ſoon relapſed, and being laid by a few months from his delightful employ, though ſome days before favorable ſymptoms appeared, his departed ſoul joined the celeſtial choir on Lord's-day morning the 22d inſtant. During this tedious illneſs he was remarkably patient and reſigned. With ſuch a family about him, who mourn in this aſſembly, and with ſuch longings of heart after the ſalvation of ſinners, as we have ſeen, which, I may ſay, was his prevailing paſſion,

no

no wonder, that, while held in ſuſpence, he ſhould be deſirous of life; yet he always expreſſed a willingneſs to depart, if the Lord ſaw meet for his glory. The laſt day or two of his life, his head was too much affected for regular converſe; but I am aſſured, that even then, at intervals, he knew his family, expreſſed his love to them, and endeavored to comfort them: he alſo dropped many things that denoted a ſolid and unſhaken hope in his Saviour; being fully perſuaded that not death itſelf ſhould be able to pluck him out of his hands; which agrees with ſome hints in his bible on John x. 27. and more particularly on the laſt clauſe of the 28th verſe. In his lateſt moments the Spirit of adoption was upon him; and he frequently called upon God under that endearing character, "My Father, my Father:" And it ſeems that the very laſt words he articulately ſpoke, and which he uttered with no ſmall emphaſis, were theſe triumphant expreſſions, VICTORY, VICTORY! What then muſt he feel! Be what it may, the ſubject I have choſen, for it was left to my choice, correſponds with the finiſh of his life: It contains the honor and triumph of the faith-

faithful, who have fought a good fight, and overcome through the blood of the Lamb.

I MUST not entirely omit the very ſorrowful family of our venerable brother: they are the juſt object of our moſt tender ſympathy, and our earneſt prayers. The principal weight of this heavy ſtroke falls on you, dear madam, the ſurviving partner of his life; may the eternal God be your refuge, and underneath his everlaſting arms! Let this view we have taken, in the light of the goſpel, of his ſeparate ſpirit with Chriſt, comfort your heart, and promote a reſignation to the will of God, and a dependence on his free and all-ſufficient grace. Fear not; your Maker is your huſband; lean upon your Beloved, and He will ſupport you: beſides, a few more trials, and *our* warfare ſhall likewiſe be accompliſhed; then ſhall we join him, with all ſaints, in the realms of peace and everlaſting light. And as for you, my young friends, who are raiſed from the loins of ſo excellent an anceſtor, you have our ardent wiſh for every thing needful, and above all, that the ſame faith may be in you, that dwelt in his heart, as we truſt it does in her, who remains the object of your filial reverence,

verence, and deareſt affection. You are perſuaded, and with the higheſt reaſon, that your late honored father is entered into reſt; a noble conſolation in this ſeaſon of trouble: but take heed that you yourſelves fall not ſhort of this happineſs! I hope better things; yet permit me, on this ſolemn occaſion, in love, to beſeech that you remember his pious counſels, and call to mind the impreſſions they have formerly made: may an effectual and laſting concern about the kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs thereof, be revived in each of your hearts, that, being partakers with him, in all the bleſſings of ſovereign grace, you may dwell together for ever. Your affliction is grievous; but, if it be thus bitter and painful to part with him in time, what muſt be the ſorrow of an everlaſting ſeparation at the tribunal of Chriſt! Far be it that any of you ſhould fail of a place at the Saviour's right hand, when he comes to judgment! By this awful change you are deprived of a principal guide of your youth; but, whatever trials or ſnares are in the way, if his God is your God, in waiting upon him, you are ſafe, he will never forſake you, but lead you by his counſel till he receives you to glory.

And

And now, my dear friends, may the loſs of this eminent and faithful ſervant in the vineyard awaken the compaſſion, the prayers, and the diligence of thoſe who love Zion. Let us comfort one another with this certain and delightful proſpect, of his glorious reſt with the Lord: let us alſo remember, that although the fathers are not, and the prophets deceaſe, yet Jeſus liveth; the rock of ages, on whom the church is built, a ſure foundation of hope in every diſtreſs; let us likewiſe cry to the Lord of the harveſt, that he would ſend forth labourers into his harveſt, and with a peculiar ſympathy for this people, who are now in a deſtitute ſtate, as Moſes for Iſrael, Numbers xxvii. 16. "Let the LORD, the "God of the ſpirits of all fleſh, ſet a man "over the congregation, which may go out "before them, and which may go in before "them, and which may lead them out, and "which may bring them in; that the congre-"gation of the LORD be not as ſheep with-"out a ſhepherd." In a word, may the God of all grace ſanctify this mournful providence, and what has now been delivered on the occaſion, in his name, to the conviction of many:

And, with reſpect to us, who believe through grace, fulfil all the good pleaſure of his goodneſs, and the work of faith with power, that, being made perfect, we alſo may behold his face in the heavenly Jeruſalem, and know by a bliſsful and eternal experience, that in his preſence is fulneſs of joy, and that, at his right hand there are pleaſures for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.

BRITISH MUSEUM 12 DE 79